Hiroshima survivors narrate sufferings

By A Correspondent

KARACHI, Jan 1: "We are still suffering from the deadly after-effects of the atomic bombings carried out by the US forces in 1945."

This was stated on Friday by one of the Hiroshima atomic bombing survivors at a meeting organized at the PMA House by the Action Committee Against Arms Race and the Pakistani Doctors for Peace and Development.

The team, which is a part of the Aichi Peace Committee, was headed by Ms Miyuki Kamezawa, who is also a hibakusha (survivor).

Giving her expressions, she said she could not forget the day when the US B-52 bombers dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Tens of thousands of people were killed and as many seriously wounded, while her sister, who was 1km away from the hypocentre, was seriously burned and lost her eyesight. She succumbed to her injuries the very next day, she added.

"It was indeed a crime one of its kind. I, for myself, hate nuclear weapons. History has proved that how dreadful these weapons are."

Another survivor, Yasuo Endo, said he was 15-years-old at that time. He said he survived because he was inside his house, which was three kilometres from the hypocentre. He said the Hiroshima city was totally destroyed. Half of the people killed were 'missing' as their bodies were burned beyond recognition and, therefore, it was impossible to identify them, he added.

The devastating effects of the explosion could not be explained in words, he said, and added that the radioactivity released by the blasts have generated severe kinds of diseases which were beyond one's imagination. The survivors have been suffering from bleeding, fatigue, hair loss, skin diseases, etc, he added.

Condemning the attitude of the US, he said soon after the bombings, the US government told the Japanese government not to inform the public about the after-effects of the atomic blasts. This prevented the researchers and physicians from providing treatment to the victims and, as a result, many more died, he added.

"The immune systems of the survivors have degraded and they are suffering from various diseases till now. As for us, we could get cancer anytime. But the tragic part is that our children and grand children could also get affected," he said.

He said the survivors were suffering from psychological problems as they were being discriminated in every field of life. "They could not get married nor could they get jobs because people don't consider them as one on their kind."

Ms Ai Takada, the translator, said the peace activists of Japan were fighting to contain nuclear testing around the world and, ultimately, their elimination.

Giving their opinion on the Pakistan-India nuclear blasts, they said nuclear weapons were no answer to any problem. They said conflicts could be overcome by meaningful dialogue not arms race.

"If a nuclear war did ever take place between the two countries it will be the poor people who will be the real sufferers. No one will be a winner in such a war. In fact, everyone will be a loser," remarked Ms Takada.

MIYUKI Kamezawa, a Hiroshima nuclear holocaust survivor, speaking at a meeting at PMA House. — Dawn